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THE RADICALISM OF JEAN PAUL MARAT

To the person whose knowledge of the French Revolution is limited to the ordinary one-volume works on that period of history, the name of Marat suggests the acme of radicalism. Even the readers of the larger histories and of the biographies of Marat are not likely to discover anything that would cause them to regard the Friend of the People as an opponent of the more liberal ideas of his day. While several writers have mentioned incidentally that Marat did not believe in the republican form of government in the early years of his life, none has devoted any appreciable time or space to the consideration of the changes in his political tendencies. Even Aulard, in his *Histoire Politique de la Révolution Française*, although he has given in passing some ten or twelve pages, scattered throughout his book, to a study of Marat's republicanism, has indicated only the most conspicuous points of his political development. The traditional conception of Marat as the staunchest of republicans has therefore gained so many adherents that it is perhaps worth while to point out that, far from being the foremost of the radicals of his day, he was one of the latest of the important revolutionary figures to renounce monarchism and to accept the republic, if he accepted it at all.

The earliest indication of Marat's political ideas is found in what seems to have been his first work, *Les Aventures du Jeune Comte Patowski*, written when he was about twenty-six years old. Here, with the reverence of a royalist, he wove a veil of romantic glamor about a group of Polish nobles. One of his characters proclaimed that, while he detested bad princes, "the world . . . sees naught more august upon the earth than a virtuous and wise king".¹ Later, in a novel of a similar nature, *Les Lettres Polonaises*, which was probably written not long after (c. 1772),² the hero was filled with great admiration for the

¹ *Un Roman du Cœur . . . d'après le manuscrit autographe . . . par le bibliophile Jacob*, Vol. II, pp. 69-70.

² The authenticity of this work has been questioned; but see *Polish Letters*, published by the Bibliophile Society of Boston, translated from the

English monarchical constitution, and with contempt for the common people.³ The first work of a political nature that Marat published was *The Chains of Slavery* (London, 1774). It was an attempt to show how kings became despots by manipulating the clergy, the army, the treasury, and the legislature in order to render themselves absolute. Although the term 'sovereign' was transferred from the ruler to the people and the king considered nothing more than the prime minister of the country, yet his arraignment of royalty applied only to individual monarchs and not to the institution of kingship. Indeed, the French version of the work, which, although unpublished until 1793, was the original from which the London edition was translated, contained Marat's belief that "a good prince is the noblest work of the Creator, best adapted to honor human nature and to represent the divine", and the still more conservative opinion, held by the majority of the pre-Revolutionary philosophers, that the republican form of government was best fitted for small states.⁴ Here was a recurrence of the lack of confidence in the common people, who "pay willingly to tyrants all the duties that they arrogantly require".⁵ In spite of the fact that his main thesis was an attack upon the increasing despotism of kings, throughout the entire work, nevertheless, he exhibited his faith in monarchy where abuse was not practised. When he published his *Plan de Législation Criminelle* (1780), although the liberal ideas already noted reappeared, coupled with the startling opinion that regicide ought to be treated as simple murder, yet, far from advocating the abolition of monarchy, in this treatise he assigned to the king the definite office of minister of the law, speaking in its name for the public welfare. Marat's king, therefore, was not a mere figurehead, but a magistrate with a definite duty to perform, for which he was held

original manuscript, in the possession of Mr. Bixby, Vol. I, pp. 79 ff.; and cf. facsimiles of chirography. The date is easily fixed between 1772 and 1777, for the book seems to have been written in England, where Marat sojourned until 1777, and contains a reference to "the news just come relative to the dismemberment of Poland". (Vol. II, p. 196).

³ *Ibid.*, (vol. II, p. 198).

⁴ *Les Chaines de L'Esclavage*, p. 24.

⁵ *Ibid.* (English edition, London, 1774), pp. 98-99.

responsible. In 1785 appeared the *Éloge de Montesquieu*. Though Marat never accepted the English monarchical constitution in its entirety, as did Montesquieu, in this eulogy the *Esprit des Lois* was reviewed without any adverse criticism whatsoever. Perhaps Marat was more anxious to win the prize which the Academy of Bordeaux was offering for the best appreciation of Montesquieu than to express his own views. At any rate, there can be no doubt that at this time he was a disciple of the author of the *Esprit des Lois*, in so far as the latter was an advocate of enlightened monarchical government.

Marat's attitudes and relations towards kings and kingship were not merely theoretical, but invaded the realm of actuality. He did not relegate all good kings to a mythological age, rare though he thought they were. Charles III of Spain he considered "a great king", "a good king",⁶ and Frederick of Prussia "the greatest of kings".⁷ Nor was it in words alone that Marat showed himself a monarchist. He held the office of Doctor of the Guards of the Count d'Artois and, in addition, seems to have answered some verbal attacks upon the Count. He even went to the point of applying for a title of nobility and using a coat of arms. Certainly, these striking evidences of monarchistic leanings justify the conclusion that before 1789 Marat was not in favor of a republic. He held the ideas conventionally entertained by the majority of the political writers of the eve of the Revolution. He was a constitutional monarchist, like most other people.

One would have expected that with the coming of the Revolution these political theories would have undergone a change. The first pamphlet that Marat published during the Revolution, however, though it repeated many of the liberal views he had formerly uttered, contained a sketch of a constitution that provided for a liberal monarchy. The king was given jurisdiction over foreign affairs, some share in internal administration, and the right of making appointments. In a supplement to this pamphlet, he argued for the separation of the executive from the legislative power, but desired the presidency of the Estates-Gen-

⁶ Chevremont: *Marat, l'Esprit Politique*, Vol. I, pp. 40 and 63.

⁷ Vellay: *Correspondance de Marat*, pp. 91 92.

eral to be vested in the first prince of the royal house or the first officer of the crown. Louis XVI he called the "Father of the People", invoked blessings upon his head, and throughout the entire *Offrande* and its supplement chanted a pæan to the royal idol that no advocate of a republic could have sung.

When the first Committee of the Constitution rendered its report, it is true that Marat issued a pamphlet, *Le Moniteur Patriote*, criticising the proposed constitution because it concentrated too much power in the hands of the king, and, in a *Projet d'un Plan de Constitution, Juste, Sage et Libre* (August, 1789), advocated universal suffrage, the divorce of the legislative and executive powers, that "the sanction of the prince be a simple formality", and that the king be vested with jurisdiction over international affairs alone.⁸ Yet, despite his anxiety to circumscribe the monarch's power, he believed that monarchy was the only form of government fitted for France.⁹ He even stated his belief that "the Prince must be examined only in his ministers; his person is sacred".¹⁰ At about the same time, in a letter to the President of the Estates-General, he opposed the plan of Mounier and the Anglophiles to give the king a large share in legislation. It is clear then that, although Marat, as a liberal monarchist, desired to restrict the king's power greatly, he had no intention of actually abolishing the monarchy.

On September 12, 1789, appeared the initial number of the *Publiciste Parisien*, later called the *Ami du Peuple*. The very first issues contained bitter denunciations of what Marat thought to be the counter-revolution. The attitude of the ministry and the aristocrats in the Assembly was becoming a cause for alarm. Necker, especially, was attacked on the ground that he was counselling the king to demand that the executive power with

⁸ Chevremont: *Marat, l'Esprit Politique*, Vol. I, p. 109, and Bougeart: *Marat l'ami du Peuple*, Vol. I, p. 172.

⁹ Chevremont, *loc cit.*, Vol. I, p. 108: "In a large state, the multiplicity of affairs demands the promptest expedition, and solicitude for its defence demands the greatest speed in the execution of orders. The form of government ought therefore to be monarchical; that is the form that befits France."

¹⁰ Michelet: *Révolution Française*, Vol. II, p. 378, quoting *Plan de Constitution*, p. 43.

all its former prerogatives and privileges be restored.¹¹ Marat feared that the king, himself infected with this royalist propaganda, was planning to flee. When he discovered that the Count of Artois had been in communication with foreign countries, he urged that Louis and the Dauphin be put under guard and the Queen and the Count imprisoned. This spirit of reaction he found particularly embodied in the proposed constitution. He saw in the right of veto bestowed upon the king and in the bicameral legislature weapons placed in the hands of the monarch that would give him the power of a despot. He also objected to the fact that the Assembly could not convene unless convoked by the executive. Yet, much as he feared the concentration of powers in the hands of the king, his only objection to the Assembly's declaration of the inviolability of the royal person and of the indivisibility and heredity of the throne was that the prerogatives of the crown had been considered before the rights of the people had been established. This, too, was his only objection when the National Assembly declared the French government to be a monarchy.

As time progressed, Marat's bias began to take a more liberal turn. The decree of the *marc d'argent* and the division of France into active and passive citizens seemed to him to violate the equality of mankind. He still maintained that the king was only the minister of the nation, even implying that he was subject to impeachment.¹² Later he declared that the ruler of his own right possessed no powers or authority, but derived them all from the consent of the ruled.¹³ Finally he averred that the person of the king ought not to be considered inviolable, that it was no more sacred "than that of the lowest citizen".¹⁴ To strengthen this assertion, he republished at about this time his *Plan de Législation Criminelle*, with its contention that regicide

¹¹ *Dénonciation contre Necker*, found in Vellay: *Pamphlets, etc.*, pp. 71-120.

¹² *Ami du Peuple*, No 55, November 23, 1789, p. 217.

¹³ *Ibid.*, No. 120, June 1, 1790, pp. 4-8: "... the chief of a nation that has shaken off the yoke is only what the nation is pleased to make him, that he possesses nothing except what the nation is pleased to give him."

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 148, June 29, 1790, pp. 5-6.

was simple murder and not *lèse-majesté*. Despite these liberal beliefs, he still adhered to the monarchy. His faith in Louis, although shaken, was still strong. He lamented that the king must have treacherous ministers who prevented him from conducting himself as he wished. He considered Louis "precisely the man we need" but for his ministers.¹⁵ Far from desiring to abolish the executive powers of the king, he assigned to the ruler the honors of sovereignty, the command of the army outside of the state, the coinage of money, the making of treaties, and the sending and receiving of ambassadors. He desired the power of the monarch null inside of the kingdom, but assigned to him certain very important duties without. Indeed, to such an extent was he a monarchist at this time that he was even apprehensive of the republic. He feared that his adopted fatherland would break up into small, loosely federated republics, which would plunge the nation into incessant civil wars. On one occasion (hoping to ridicule the idea that Avignon had to seek the acquiescence of the Papal States to annex itself to France), Marat cried:—

"Yes, I maintain in the face of heaven and earth, if the provinces of France wanted to-day to erect themselves as republics, there is no power under the sun that has the right to oppose them."¹⁶

It would seem that he considered such a desire on the part of the French provinces preposterous, and cited it only as the most radical instance of self-determination he could imagine.

Until August, 1790, then, Marat's political theories had undergone no essential change. In general, he was in sympathy with the left of the Constituent Assembly, maintaining with them that a carefully limited monarchy was the best form of government for France, but, more conservative than they, asserting that the creation of such a government could best be effected through Louis XVI and the Assembly.

During the next two years Marat's attitude toward the king developed from one of positive personal affection and confidence

¹⁵ *On Nous Endort, Prenons-y Garde*, August 9, 1790, p. 12, fn.

¹⁶ *Ami du Peuple*, No. 207, August 31, 1790, p. 6.

into one of mere tolerance, and was finally to take the form of bitter enmity and hatred, due to the rise of the menace of the counter-revolution. The mutiny of revolutionary forces at Nancy precipitated this change of feeling. Marat, who had opposed the Assembly's part in the affair from the very first, unhesitatingly directed his invective at the king when definite news of the massacre reached Paris. As long as he lived, he said, he would accuse Louis of the crime. In fact, he came to believe that he always had considered Louis "the greatest enemy of the Revolution"¹⁷ and "the chief of the conspirators against the country".¹⁸ He openly accused the king of being in collusion with the *émigrés* and of planning escape.¹⁹ He now looked upon the proposed constitution as a complete failure. Every power granted to the executive, even the command of the army, which he formerly had conceded, he begrudged, and came to the conclusion that the only result of the Revolution had been to assign definitely to the monarch rights which he had enjoyed merely by common consent in the ancient régime. The acridity of his feeling was sharpened by a royalist demonstration in Belfort, while the memory of the Nancy affair was still fresh, but the climax was reached when the king confirmed all of Marat's fears by actually attempting flight. Before Louis returned, Marat urged that he be obliged to abdicate, and on June 25th demanded that the education of the Dauphin be entrusted to Robespierre in order that he might be removed from the baneful influence of his parents. After the return of the king he began to look forward to the Legislative Assembly to cope with the counter-revolution, but when he found that "the new conscript fathers are no better than the old",²⁰ in disgust he prepared to quit France. In December, 1791, he left for England and returned in March. His journal did not appear again until April, and since he was forced into hiding immediately thereafter for his incendiary attacks, it

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 309, December 13, 1790, p. 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 305, December 9, 1790, p. 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, *passim*, but see especially No. 380, February 23, 1791, and No. 496, June 21, 1791, the day before the king actually did take flight.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 568, October 6, 1791, p. 3.

was not until August 10, 1792, that he was able to resume an active part in the course of events. On that fatal day, he instituted a series of attacks upon the unfortunate Louis that were eventually to play an important part in the former monarch's death. He repudiated as imaginary the inviolability of the king's person.²¹ He objected vehemently to a referendum to decide Louis's fate. This opposition casts a significant light upon his opinion of popular government, because he was afraid that, in addition to showing partiality to the dethroned Bourbon and discriminating against other criminals, such a course would lead to civil strife. His aim now was to get rid of the king in as expeditious and effective a manner as possible.

Most of the monarchists of the period, when they found that their confidence in the King had been misplaced, pinned their hopes to the republic. But Marat wavered. It is not clear whether he ever actually lost faith in monarchy as the best form of government for France in normal times, but certainly he did come to think that, so long as the particular monarch Louis XVI ruled over the destinies of his country, the Revolution could not be successfully consummated. Under the stress of the Nancy and Belfort affairs, he declared (November 4, 1790) that it was a mistake to think that France necessarily had to be a monarchy and advocated therefore the transference of the reigns of government to a general council.²² Even in the statement of this programme, however, there was the implication that the republican form of government was more cumbersome than monarchy; and in the same issue in which it appeared he still clung to his belief that "virtue upon the throne is the noblest of the works of the Creator".²³ Later he asserted that an hereditary prince must necessarily be an enemy of the people and that "the King of France is of less importance than a fifth wheel to a cart".²⁴ On November 12, he advised the legislature either to restrict the authority of the monarch, or, better yet, to proscribe the crown entirely.

²¹ *Archives Parlementaires*, Vol. 54, pp. 246-249; cf. *Journal de la République*, Nos. 65 and 66, December 4 and 5, 1792.

²² *Ami du Peuple*, No. 271, November 4, 1790, pp. 4-5.

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 274, November 8, 1790, pp. 6 and 8.

But even here he seems willing to accept a limited monarchy in place of no monarchy whatsoever, and, after the period of comparative calm between November, 1790, and February, 1791, we find him again stating that very carefully restricted monarchy is the best form of government for France.²⁵ When the flight of the king absorbed his interest, his anti-monarchical sentiments dominated him anew, and those who "have not ceased to preach that a state such as France can be only monarchical"²⁶ became the object of his derision. In the following September, however, we find him carrying water on the other shoulder, arguing in favor of restoring the titles and honors of the nobility. The final change of mind came in October, 1791, after the Legislative Assembly had disappointed him, when he was forced to the conclusion that hereditary monarchy was necessarily and inherently wicked.²⁷ This long-delayed utterance is left unmitigated by any reversal of opinion in his subsequent statements.

Obviously, Marat was being torn by a conservative respect for the monarchy and distrust of popular government on the one hand, and by suspicion of the king and the royalists on the other. His temporary bias, one way or the other, depended upon the momentary political situation in France. Having lost faith in monarchy, or at least in Louis XVI, as the means of carrying the Revolution successfully forward, Marat did not seek the remedy for the emergency in the Republic, like most of the leaders of the time. As we have seen, he had no great faith in popular government in general, and, besides, considered the French people particularly unfit for democracy. Wavering as to what ought to be the permanent form of government for France, he turned to the only measure that may be considered original or radical in

²⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 374, February 17, 1791, pp. 7-8: "I do not know whether the counter-revolutionaries will force us to change the form of government, but I do know that very limited monarchy is what is best adapted to us to-day, in view of the depravity and baseness of the supporters of the ancient régime, all so much disposed to abuse the powers that have been confided to them. With such men a federated republic would soon degenerate into oligarchy. . . . As to the person of Louis XVI, . . . he is, all things considered, the King we need."

²⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 434, April 20, 1791, p. 4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 572, October 12, 1791, pp. 6-7.

all his political philosophy—the establishment of a dictatorship. This demand is first heard in February, 1790, when Marat appealed to his adopted countrymen “to name for a short time a supreme dictator, to arm him with the public forces and to entrust to him the punishment of the guilty”.²⁸ It seems that this cry was premature and for a time it was not voiced again. It is to Marat’s credit that, having once conceived this panacea, he did not allow it to lapse entirely, although it gained no support. In September he renewed the demand. On November 1 and, again, five days before the king fled to Varennes, it was repeated. When, therefore, Louis did confirm all of Marat’s apprehensions by the flight, the self-styled Friend of the People became loud in his demands for a dictator, urging that one be named that very day and threatening to desert his dearly beloved Parisians unless they did his bidding.²⁹ On the following day he made a similar utterance. Although the people did not do as he asked, and although their feeling when the king was brought back to Paris was one of profound relief, Marat did not abandon them. He continued his championing of the dictatorship, and when war with Austria became imminent, standing almost alone in opposition to the declaration of hostilities, he reiterated his belief in the “necessity of choosing once and for all a supreme dictator”,³⁰ and in the efficacy of popular insurrection under a “prudent, staunch, upright and incorruptible chief”.³¹ During the months that followed (April to August, 1792), while the republican movement was growing from an ideal cherished by a handful of dreamers into a universal demand, Marat was able to see no safety for France except in the dictatorship. He appeared oblivious to the development of the desire for a republic. The *Ami du Peuple*, which, because of his having been in hiding from the police authorities, appeared only twenty-nine times between May 3 and August 10, contained no allusion to the prevalent idea of popular government; the very word *république* does not appear. Between August 10 and September 22

²⁸ *Appel à la Nation*, p. 53.

²⁹ *Ami du Peuple*, No. 497, June 22, 1791, pp. 6-7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 634, April 19, 1792, p. 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, No. 668, July 8, 1792, pp. 7-8.

Marat was kept busy with his duties as a member of the *Comité de Surveillance*, and consequently his paper seldom was issued. What we have contains nothing to indicate that he desired or even expected the declaration of a republic. In fact, on September 21, the very day before the National Convention, to which Marat himself was a deputy, decreed the Republic, he repeated his demand for a dictator.

Marat has been accused of wishing to make each of several men dictator. We may dismiss the accusation that it was the Duc d'Orleans with the statement that at the time that Marat was advocating the dictatorship, as well as later, he was attacking Orleans as a "prince of the blood" and "of the court party."³² The request that Marat made of Orleans for money was public and cannot be considered a reward for conspiracy, especially since Marat never received the money. There were only two men who met with favor in Marat's eyes. These were Robespierre and Danton, and he has been charged with wishing to create one of them dictator. Marat denied this accusation, saying of Robespierre that he lacked statesmanlike views and audacity, and of Danton that he preferred anything to a throne.³³ Danton and Robespierre themselves repudiated any designs on their part of such a nature, while Marat openly claimed the guilt of preaching the dictatorship without support from anyone.³⁴ Besides, it is hardly possible that Marat, if he had wanted the dictatorship for either of them, would have conducted a campaign of eulogy for both at the same time, or that he would have delayed doing so for a year after he had first demanded such an office. What is most likely is that Marat planned to have the dictatorship for himself. On July 26, 1790, he enumerated the things that he would do if he were tribune.³⁵ In the following November

³² *Ibid.*, No. 187, August 10, 1790, pp. 4-5, and *Journal de la République*, No. 84, December 25, 1792, p. 2.

³³ *Ami du Peuple*, Nos. 648 and 660, but especially *Publiciste de la République*, No. 221, June 19, 1793, p. 2.

³⁴ *Archives Parlementaires*, Vol. 52, pp. 128-142, September 25, 1792, and *Journal de la République*, Nos. 4-5, September 28-29, 1792.

³⁵ *Ami du Peuple*, No. 173, July 26, 1790, p. 7, fn.: "If I were tribune of the people and were supported by several thousand determined men, I declare that within six weeks the constitution would be perfected, that the po-

he made another declaration of a similar nature.³⁶ After the massacre of the Champ de Mars he expressed the wish that he might rally to his command two thousand men to punish the perpetrators of the deed.³⁷ In September he made still another clever bid, although with an ambiguity that was perhaps intended.³⁸ Finally, in July, 1792, in a statement that may be regarded as summing up his entire stand on the dictatorship, although he did not mention himself by name, he practically offered himself for the position.³⁹

True it is that Marat did deny this personal motive on at least two occasions. In one of these denials, however, he made the declaration that after the flight of the king he could have been named tribune, had he wished⁴⁰—a statement which is obviously

litical machinery, well organized, would go as well as possible, that no public scoundrel would dare to derange it, that the nation would be free and happy, that in less than a year it would be flourishing and formidable, and that it would remain so as long as I lived."

³⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 275, November 9, 1790, p. 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, No. 524, July 20, 1791, p. 8.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 543, September 2, 1791, p. 6: "All my hopes of crushing tyranny, of breaking forever the irons of the nation and of making liberty triumph, lie in the brave soldiers of the line troops. They need only a chief, a man of head and heart. If the purest sense of civic duty [*civisme*] counts for anything at all, I would want a friend of the people [*un ami du peuple*] for them. I would give one of my fingers right now that they might know my sentiments [*connussent mes sentiments*] and put them to the test."

³⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 668, July 8, 1792, pp. 7-8: "What means are left to us to-day to put an end to the evils that overwhelm us? I repeat, there is no other than popular executions and we shall have to have recourse to that even after fifty years of anarchy, dissensions and disasters, if we ever again resist the despots sworn against us and if we ever wish to be free at last. . . . Only two objections of little weight have been offered in opposition to this plan. One is that it would be impossible to find a single citizen who would fill any office if he had perpetually to fear popular executions. I answer that there is an infallible means of avoiding them. That is to show oneself a good patriot. . . . The other is that it would be dangerous to abandon to themselves a blind multitude. But what prevents giving them a prudent, staunch, upright and incorruptible chief? Where find him? Must you be told? You know a man who aspires only to the glory of sacrificing himself to the welfare of our country. You have seen him at work a long time—but I had better be on my guard against allowing his disinterestedness to be suspected, in case he should ever become the object of your choice and has not himself lost all hope of any longer serving your cause."

⁴⁰ *Journal de la République*, No. 40, November 8, 1792, p. 7, fn. 1.

untrue; in the other he insisted that he would not have taken the tribuneship, if it had been offered, because the fickle populace, which had crowned him in the morning, might have hanged him in the evening,⁴¹ forgetting that this popular fickleness was a fixed quantity that had to be dealt with regardless of whether he himself or whoever else he wanted—for he must have had someone in mind—held the dictatorship. Furthermore, we must remember that he was ambitious; Brissot tells us so,⁴² and if we do not wish to take a Girondin's testimony regarding Marat's character, we have the latter's own confession to that effect.⁴³ In justice to Marat it must be said that he desired, not a Cæsar, but a Cincinnatus—a brief and limited dictator. In one statement, quoted above, he considered as short a time as six weeks sufficient for the duration of such an office. Until September 22, 1792, then, we find him, torn between a distrust of monarchy and a lack of confidence in democracy, advocating the dictatorship as a temporary expedient for weathering the storm of the Revolution.

On that day the Republic was definitely established. Marat did not commit himself for several days thereafter. If he was present at the opening sessions of the National Convention, he took no part in them. For three days after the Republic was decreed his journal was not issued. On September 25 it reappeared, not as the *Ami du Peuple*, but with the startling title of *Journal de la République Française*. In this first number, he expressed his satisfaction with the majority of the deputies and read that issue that afternoon in the Convention by way of apology for a previous declaration of dissatisfaction. In the second issue of the *Journal*, the session of September 22 was reported without any comment, favorable or adverse. Marat seems to have accepted the proclamation of the Republic as a matter of course, but only after the Republic itself was *fait accompli*. Even now, however, his surrender was not complete, for he feared that as long as the king lived, a republic would be too weak

⁴¹ *Publiciste de la République*, No. 221, June 19, 1793, p. 3.

⁴² Brissot: *Mémoires*, Vol. I, p. 359.

⁴³ *Journal de la République*, No. 98, January 14, 1793, p. 2.

to meet the counter-revolution. He consequently refused to have absolute faith in the Republic until the quondam monarch's head should fall from his shoulders. In Louis XVI he saw the rallying-point of the enemies of the Revolution and therefore could feel assured of the liberty and firm foundation of the new government only through the former ruler's death.⁴⁴ Likewise he opposed a popular referendum on the execution of the unfortunate Capet, because the royalists were scheming to keep Louis alive. Finally, when a vote was taken upon the postponement of the execution of the king, Marat demanded immediate punishment, saying that "the Republic is only a house of cards until the head of the tyrant falls under the axe of the law".⁴⁵ It was only on January 23, 1793, after the execution of the unhappy monarch, that he came out definitely with the exclamation: "I believe in the Republic at last!"⁴⁶ At about the same time he republished his *Chains of Slavery* with its statement that a republic was best fitted for small states. Although this might justify the conclusion that he thought France was too large for a republic, the fact is that one of his chief reasons for opposing the Girondists was his fear that they wished to break France up into small, loosely federated republics. On June 12 he announced his acceptance of the Constitution of 1793, which established the Republic one and indivisible, referring to it as "a monument of popularity and virtue".⁴⁷

Marat's acceptance of the Republic required, of course, a reversal of his dictatorship policy. As early as September 25, he spoke apologetically of his demand in that connection, both in his paper and on the floor of the convention. This attitude is to be witnessed again on November 8, when he referred to the matter as belonging to the historical past, and still again on the following day. In December he expressed his fear that if the convention should not be equal to its task, the nation would be

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 66, December 5, 1792, pp. 3-4; cf. *Archives Parlementaires*, Vol. 57, p. 439, January 19, 1793.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 104, January 22, 1793, p. 2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 105, January 23, 1793, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁷ *Publiciste de la République*, No 214, June 12, 1793, p. 3.

obliged "to renounce democracy to give itself a chief",⁴⁸ but later insisted that this was an expression of anxiety for what might have happened if the country's deputies had failed.⁴⁹ After the death of Louis XVI, he devoted a large part of his efforts to living down the reputation he had acquired for having been the chief advocate of the dictatorship. On March 30, 1793, in a *Profession of Faith*, he denied any ambitious intentions in that direction. It is significant that when rumor had it that Dumouriez was marching upon Paris, Marat did not cry for a dictator, as he certainly would have done before September 22, 1792, but urged the formation of a Committee of General Defence to meet the situation.⁵⁰ Furthermore, in supporting the creation of the Committee of Public Safety, he refuted the contention that it would result in a dictatorship—a contention that at one time would have been his main argument in favor of the plan. And, last, when he was brought up for trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal on several charges, one of which was the accusation that he had proposed to establish a *chef de l'état*, his reply to this was an almost categorical denial.⁵¹

The facts thus far would perhaps justify us in concluding that Marat had at last become a staunch republican. His last important declaration in that connection, however, would belie such a conclusion. Addressing the friendly Jacobins, over a week after he had openly accepted the Constitution of 1793, he said:—

"No one has more horror of a master than I. But in actual crises, I want chiefs to direct the operations of the people in order that they take no false steps and that their efforts be not futile."⁵²

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 84, December 25, 1792, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁹ *Moniteur*, No. 361, December 26, 1792, p. 1535; cf. *Archives Parlementaires*, Vol. 55, pp. 427-428, December 25, 1792.

⁵⁰ *Archives Parlementaires*, Vol. 64, pp. 128-129, April 3, 1793; *Publiciste de la République Française* (successor to the *Journal*), No. 161, April 5, 1793, p. 6.

⁵¹ *Publiciste de la République*, No. 180, April 28, 1793, pp. 4-5.

⁵² *Société des Amis de la Liberté et de l'Égalité, séante aux ci-devant Jacobins*, June 20, 1793, p. 3.

Perhaps, had he lived long enough and had the actual crisis occurred, Marat might again have urged the dictatorship. The possibility of such a contingency was precluded by his sudden death about three weeks after the foregoing words were written. But such a statement, coming almost immediately before his death, renders uncertain how much faith Marat really had in the Republic at any time.

Marat can be considered a supporter of the republican idea for only half a year of his life, if at all. There was nothing that typified radicalism in the career of one who accepted an untried but generally advocated form of government only after it had been safely established, and then, as it seems, with reluctance. Not even in his dictatorship policy can we find an unusual degree of radicalism, since a tribuneship limited both in its duration and in its vested powers can in no wise be called a great departure in the form of government. How, then, does Marat's reputation for radicalism arise? Its source is to be found not in his political opinions, but in the violence of his words, his cries for popular executions, and the vehemence of his attacks. We must make a distinction between thought and expression. In appraising Marat's views on monarchy and republicanism we find that it is his expression, not his thought, that was radical.

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